

Flint Creek Water Users Association

Date

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Board of Directors: Jay Hendrix, Tom McGowan, Rex Radtke, Charlie Goff, Presiding officer Bill Dennis

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March 31, 2011

Chairman Senator Dave Lewis and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

The Flint Creek Water Users is an irrigation association that operates and maintains the East Fork of Rock Dam and the irrigation water delivery system consisting of a siphon and canals. The infrastructure is owned by the State of Montana. The dam sits on federal forest land, near the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.

There are 52 members of the association, ranches along Flint Creek which flows from the mountains through the Flint Creek Valley, toward Philipsburg and then north to near the town of Drummond. The East Fork Water Project has made viable agricultural businesses possible by supplying the critical element of irrigation water since the 1930's.

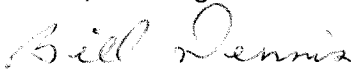
The association has worked closely with the DNRC Water Resources to repair and maintain the infrastructure of this irrigation system. The East Fork Dam needed a major repair, which the Water Users are still paying for. Recently the large siphon was replaced at considerable expense (\$1M), some covered by grants, some borne (\$200K) by the Association. The project is required by federal rules to have a fish screen, a controversial and complex topic.

Some partial grant funding toward a fish screen has been obtained, approximately \$370K, from the Natural Resource Damage Program. The RRGL grant application of \$100K is to be added to this project. The Water Users are appreciative of DNRC partnering on the fish screen project, but are aware that any funding gap between grant support and project costs will be borne by the Association's 52 members.

The Flint Creek Water Users Association is respectfully requesting that funding for the DNRC's RRGL grant be supported. The grant application was submitted by the DNRC; however the costs of failing to fund this project will be borne by the Association members.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bill Dennis, Presiding Officer



Jay Hendrix, Board of Directors

